

# Resilience: Practices

Self-Facilitated Retreat Guide

*Part 1 of 3 in the  
Resilience Self-Guided Retreat Series*



*the center for*  
Transforming  
Engagement

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This self-facilitated retreat was created by the team of the Center for Transforming Engagement, which exists to leverage the power of relationships to equip leaders and teams for positive social change through developing personal, social, and ecological resilience.

This team is composed of individuals who are diverse in training and occupation (pastors, counselors, educators, gatherers and relationship facilitators), generation, ethnicity and culture, family configuration, and gender identification.

Learn more about our frame for resilience through [The Resilience Report](#). Discover more about our offerings and team at [transformingengagement.org](https://transformingengagement.org), and follow on instagram [@transforming\\_engagement](https://www.instagram.com/transforming_engagement) to be the first to know about free resources and new releases.



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*All scripture from The Message, NavPress, 2014, modified for gender-neutral pronouns for the divine.*

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# Welcome

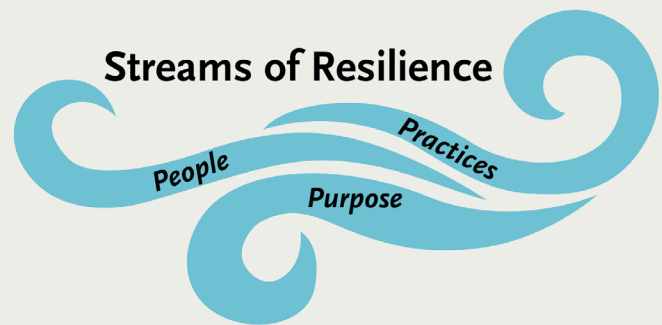
***When you invest in your personal resilience, you are also building the resilience of the communities around you.***

It can be hard to take the time to step back from everyday responsibilities to engage in the deeper questions of life — but it is vitally important to long-term wellbeing, not only your wellbeing but also the wellbeing of those who rely on you. Stepping back to reflect and make changes allows you to step back in with more vitality to serve and more clarity of purpose.

This retreat is focused on “Practices,” one of the three streams of resilience. Practices are the ways we care for our full self — spiritually, emotionally, physically, mentally — with kindness and compassion. Resilient people intentionally practice cycles of rest that grow wholeness. They know that body, soul, and mind are a trinity, each part needing care and tending and each part inextricably intertwined with the others. They see these practices not as selfish self-care, but as key to the sustainability of their good work. It is essential to reflect on which practices are restorative, restful and re-creational for you; this allows you to build them into your life in consistent ways, so that you have healthy coping skills even in chaos, and energy reserves when you most need them.

***“There are times when our energy is deeply needed — in our ministry and personal lives — so we learn practices beforehand to make us ready when those times come.” Reverend Jes Kast***

Jesus modeled a healthy cycle of engagement with others and restorative practices. For example, the gospel authors are intentional to include this



fact: Jesus prayed. Mark tells us that Jesus “went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” Matthew writes that “he went up a mountainside by himself to pray.” Luke states that “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” Jesus actively engaged his well-being in a world where there were a multitude of distractions and where crowds needed him.

He could have been healing more people during that time — curing leprosy and blindness. He could have been feeding the hungry. He could have been performing miracles that fulfilled the law and prophecies. Instead, he chose to take care of himself. We could even go so far as to say he had to take care of his well-being so that he could continue healing, feeding, and evangelizing.

If Jesus needed to practice care for himself, it’s pretty likely that we need to, too.

***“It is no coincidence that the root word of whole, health, heal, holy is hale (as in hale and hearty). If we are healed, we become whole; we are hale and hearty; we are holy.”***

– Madeleine L'Engle

# How to Use This Retreat Guide

Though this is a self-guided retreat, you don't have to do it on your own. We have offered prompts here for both of these options: (1) Personal Retreat and (2) Retreat with a few friends. If you're doing a personal retreat, we suggest using "Questions to reflect and write on." If you're with others, we suggest using "Questions to discuss." That said: You are welcome to mix and match as meets your needs.

This retreat is shaped like a liturgy, following the pattern of Gather - Transform - Send. This Resilience: Practices guide is the first in a series of three; the others focus on People and Purpose. Though this guide is designed to stand on its own, you might consider setting aside time for the other retreats in the coming season.

## What You'll Need for This Retreat

- 1-2 hours
- Journal or paper and pen, for each participant
- A timer, or a clock with a second hand
- *Optional:*
  - *Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers*
  - *Candles*
  - *Food and drink to share during conversation, if meeting with others*

# Resilience Retreat: Practices

We used to think of stress as something that was added onto a baseline of calm. New research is showing that stress is our norm. Stress is the baseline, and we need to regularly, actively pursue a state of calm in our bodies. Without resilient practices that restore our physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing, the state of chronic stress will cause burnout. By neglecting healthy practices, we unwittingly choose to become martyrs. Martyrs prioritize everyone and every task above their own needs; believe their suffering is beneficial or even necessary or tied to their worth; and give of themselves until there is no self left to give. We might also create maladaptive coping patterns, soothing ourselves in reaction to stress in ways that undermine long-term wellbeing.

But there is another way to approach the stress of life. We can intentionally make plans to engage in practices of rest and renewal in healthy cycles. Practices may include having regular connection time with a friend, releasing stress through exercise, making art, gardening, taking a weekly Sabbath, designating time each day that is work-free or tech-free — there are a multitude of activities that might restore you. Sometimes a single practice can bring health in multiple domains. For example, prayer is usually considered a spiritual practice, but it also improves heart health. As you continue this retreat, we invite you into a non-judgment space to notice your patterns and to discern what practices God might be inviting you into in this phase of your life.

# Gather

Embodiment is one of the most important parts of being a person, yet we often lose touch with the connection between body and spirit in the midst of everyday stress. So we invite you to begin this retreat with a reunion between body and spirit. Focus your attention on the present moment. Prepare for the possibility of encountering the divine with us in new ways. Start with a body scan, then take some time to practice a statio divina, and then transition with a prayer.

## I Body Scan

- Get in a comfortable position, feet on the ground.
- Take a couple of deep breaths, feel the breath down into your center and exhale slowly.
- We are going to breathe through our body beginning at the top of our heads, breathe in and imagine your breath filling your head, your brain, your scalp. Exhale.
- Next breathe in and imagine breath filling your eyes, your ears, your nose, your throat. Exhale.
- Breathe in and fill your neck, shoulders, and arms with your breath. Notice if there is any tightness, and breathe into any place that feels constricted or tight. Exhale.
- Next, breathe in and fill your lungs, feel your chest, your heart, your waist, and your stomach. Again, notice any places that feel tight, breathe into those places. Exhale.
- Breathe in and fill your legs and your feet all the way to the tips of your toes with your breath. Noticing any place that feels stretched, tight or constricted. Exhale.
- Take a final breath in, count to four, hold it on the count of four, and exhale slowly on the count of four.

# Gather

## I Statio Divina

*“Statio is a monastic practice of stopping one thing before we begin another. It is the time between the times. In monastic spirituality it is common for the community to gather in silence before beginning prayer.”*  
— Joan Chittister

Statio Divina is latin for “divine stillness.” In Statio, we pause for 2-5 minutes to:

- quiet our hearts, minds and bodies;
- sit in gratitude to consider where we are and what we are about to do;
- recognize our connection together in different places around the world, yet together in the body of Christ.

## I Prayer

After the Statio, we invite you to conclude with prayer.

*As I enter this space, I leave behind what just was, and spend a moment in gratitude for this space.*

*Please brush away any weariness that may be present to this work.*

*Help me to discover new ways to love God, my neighbor, myself and creation.*

*Keep my mind clear and focused.*

*Let your gentle whisper guide me through this time.*

*My heart posture is open to receive your love and goodness.*

*Amen.*

# Transform

## I Lectio Divina

*“Diligently practice prayer and lectio divina. When you pray, you speak with God; when you read, God speaks to you.”*  
— St. Cyprian

Read through three times. You may want to use a [Bible Audio App](#) so that you can simply listen.

The first reading, *listen for a word or phrase that speaks to you.*  
Reflect for 2 minutes. You may want to write down responses.

The second reading, listen again. *How might God be speaking to you through that word or phrase?*  
Reflect and write for 2 minutes.

The third reading, listen yet again. *How might God be calling you to act in response to that word or phrase?*  
Reflect and write for 2 minutes.

## I Matthew 11:28–30, The Message

Jesus said: “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”



# Transform

## I Questions to reflect and write

After the third reading, allow extra time for reflecting on the below questions.

- Use the word or phrase you heard as a prompt for a stream of consciousness written reflection. Where does that word intersect with your life story? What might that word be calling you to next?
- *Religion* shares a word root with *ligaments* - it's meant to be a source of connection and strength. And, human systems and sins can distort religion into an obligation, or something that might even burn us out. Are there components of religion that leave you spiritually burnt or numb? Are there components of religion or of wellness culture that have been heavy or ill-fitting?
- What is tiring you, wearing you out?

# Transform

## I Worksheet (Individual or Group)

Complete the worksheet on the following page, “Your Current Way of Life” to name patterns and practices. After, write or discuss any of the questions at the bottom of the worksheet, or share about one practice you would like to engage to replace an existing pattern.

## I Questions to discuss (Group)

Practices are essential for noticing our tiredness, tending to our well-being, and increasing our capacity to tolerate stressors. And: individual practices alone aren't enough to overcome overwhelming stress in our environments.

- What causes you stress in your daily life? In your workplace? In your home? In your local context? In the global context?
- Jesus's rhythms of rest seem to include both walking and working. What do you think Jesus has in mind when he says real rest? How is real rest different from what culture considers rest?
- What gives you hope or inspiration?
- What are practices you can do to cultivate or contribute to more hope in your daily life? In your workplace? In your home? In your community?

# Your Current Way of Life Worksheet

## Name Patterns and Practices

We all live by rhythms, whether intentionally crafted or habitual. It may help to think in terms of both patterns and practices when naming our current rhythms.

**Pattern:** A regular, ingrained behavior returned to in times of apathy or stress. This includes negative stories we tell ourselves, destructive habits, and known stressors or triggers. These are often maladaptive coping mechanisms. Patterns often don't feel like choices so much as defaults.

**Practice:** A regular, intentional engagement that leads to health and wholeness. This includes positive stories and affirmations, constructive habits, and ways of refueling and recentering. These are adaptive coping mechanisms that continue to adapt to shifting contexts. Practices stem from a sense of agency and choice.

Take some time to write about the patterns and practices you currently live in. It may be helpful to do so in each of the five realms (physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual). This is not a place for judging these behaviors; it's simply noting what is, and confessing what is true.

Category of well-being	Patterns I fall into	Practices I engage
Example: Mental	Rumination. Obsessing over what I should have done, especially before sleep.	Meditation, 10 min/day, 4-5 days/week
Physical		
Mental		
Emotional		
Social		
Spiritual		

- When change is able to take hold, it's often because the pain of staying the same is greater than the pain of changing. For a pattern you would like to address, write about the pain.
- In looking at your patterns and practices: Where does it hurt? Which of these patterns and practices hurt yourself or others? In what ways?
- It can be helpful to recall or read about the pain in moments it is especially challenging to resist patterns and to build new practices.

# Send

To prepare for parting into the journey of our lives, we pack the key learnings from our conversations as we orient ourselves towards hope. The below practice can guide your reflection on the dark valleys and green fields you have visited together in these reflections, to take those thoughts and feelings into your evening and your life — sustenance for resilience in the days ahead.

## Visio Divina Instructions

*“Visio divina invites us to see and explore the entirety of an image in God’s presence and to go beyond our simple first and second impressions to a deeper place where we can be surprised.”*

— *Therese Kay, in Meeting God through Art*

Vision divina is latin for “divine seeing.” Visio Divina is a method of praying with images or other media. You will listen to Psalm 23 while meditating on the art (use a [Bible Audio App](#), or there are readings on YouTube). After each reading, pause so you can reflect on and write down what you notice:

- What do I **see** in this image?
- What does the illumination make me **think** about?
- What does the illumination make me **wonder**?

# Send



Jesus Washing the Feet of Peter (2014)  
by Jyoti Sahi

*The shape of the pipal leaf, a Buddhist symbol of enlightenment, emphasizes the giving and receiving of care.*

## Luke 4:14–21, The Message

Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been raised. On the Sabbath he went to the synagogue as he normally did and stood up to read. The synagogue assistant gave him the scroll from the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the synagogue assistant, and sat down. Every eye in the synagogue was fixed on him. He began to explain to them, “Today, this scripture has been fulfilled just as you heard it.”

# Send

## | Prayer

After the visio, we invite you to conclude with a prayer.

*Christ Has No Body But Yours - St. Teresa of Ávila (attributed)*

*Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which God looks  
Compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which God walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands, with which God blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.  
Christ has no body now but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which God looks  
compassion on this world.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.  
Amen.*

# Gratitude

Thank you for spending this time to grow your personal resilience. We hope that you have a renewed vision for the rhythms and routines of your life and a plan to deepen the Practices stream of your resilience. It's this cycle of reflection followed by action that leads to positive personal transformation, which leads to community transformation.

If you enjoyed this guide, we also have self-guided retreats for the People and Purpose streams of resilience. Follow us to learn about new releases.

If you'd like to go deeper into your Practices, join us in [Way of Life](#), an online course with occasional community opportunities. To be the first to know about community opportunities and other new resources, follow us on instagram [@transforming\\_engagement](#) and sign up for the emails at [transformingengagement.org](https://transformingengagement.org).

*We'd love to hear your experience of this resource! Email us at [transforming@theseattleschool.edu](mailto:transforming@theseattleschool.edu) with "Resilience Retreat" in the subject line.*



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